

Lemberg: Cosmopolitan Crownland Capital of the Austrian Empire

The purpose of this exhibit is to present the postal history of the Austrian Empire during the 150-year period of its greatest expansion using material that came from, went to, or passed through one of its crownland (provincial) capitals – Lemberg.

While descriptive emphasis is on the evolution of postal rates, prominence is also attached to the characterization of postal markings.

Listed below are the five major divisions of this exhibit along with short descriptions highlighting the major facets of each. Exhibit pages follow a roughly chronological sequence. Items of exceptional importance are highlighted with red borders.

1. Pre-Stamp Austria (1772 - 1850)

Pre-Stamp town postmarks fall into two distinct periods: 18th century (to 1790; town name only) and 19th century (1818 to 1850; gradual introduction of dates). During the interim 28 years, no town postmarks were used in any Austrian post offices!

2. Austrian Monarchy (1850 - 1867)

Austria was one of the first European countries to introduce the use of postage stamps. Early stamp issues were sometimes cancelled with pre-stamp markers, but new cancel types soon evolved. Despite the ready acceptance of the newfangled “franking voucher,” for a number of years, many international mails continued to be sent without stamps and as postage due. During the seven decades of postage stamp use, only six domestic postal tariffs were instituted.

3. Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (1867 - 1914)

A great variety of (generally) round markers were produced during this period to handle the boom in the use of postal services. Austria-Hungary led the world with the production of the first postal cards, an inexpensive (and soon very popular) method of communication. Other postal innovations introduced during this time included letter cards, special court delivery stamps, money letters, newspaper stamps, traveling post offices, and postal money orders.

4. The Great War (1914 - 1918)

A wide variety of interesting military and censor post markings may be found during this four-year span: not just from Austro-Hungarian units, but also from occupying (Russian) detachments. The world's first regular and first international airmail service Vienna-Krakow-Lemberg-Kyiv functioned for seven months until the close of hostilities.

5. The Flame of Nationalism (1918 - 1919)

The Western Ukrainian National Republic declared its independence from Austria-Hungary in Lemberg and soon issued its own stamps by overprinting available Austrian stamps. Poland ultimately seized the city, which it would occupy for the next two decades.

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woman who in the
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A portrait of Marie Antoinette by Jean-Baptiste-André Chéreau. She is depicted in a three-quarter view, wearing an extremely elaborate, ruffled gown in shades of brown and beige. She holds a large key in her right hand, which rests on a red velvet cushioned pedestal. On the pedestal sits the French crown. To her left, a small table holds a glass of water and a glass of wine. The background is dark and indistinct.

Ich bin nun zu meinem geordneten
 Verlust so weit gekommen, dass ich
 gezwungen bin, mich zu begeben,
 und mich in der billigen An-
 erkennung der Güte der
 Götter zu beruhigen, so
 sehr ich es wünsche, dass ich
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 zu wünschen, dass er
 als mein einziger
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 Angelegenheiten
 und mich in der
 Angelegenheit
 bittet, aus dieser
 Angelegenheit

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bezwoersu.

Мария Тереза